

CAT--AN OBITUARY

Our Cat was born in the year 1968 to a cat family who lived in Salt Lake City, Utah, the year that our son, Tracy, and our daughter, Elizabeth, were married--one week apart, December of that year. Elizabeth was married to John Martin Neil on 13 December, 1968, and Howard Tracy Hall, Jr. to Elizabeth Huntington, 20 December 1968. All the endowment sessions, the showers, the sealings, the weddings, the open houses, etc. were all over except for Betsy's reception, which was to be on the 28th of December. We were preparing to drive to Tacoma for that. *Washington, where Betsy's parents lived, for that.*

Living in our family at the time we acquired Cat was another cat, frequently referred to by various names, namely--Slink, Clarence, or, simply, Kitty. Each cat that we have had as our children grew up, had distinct, individual personalities, and the reigning cat in 1958 was no exception to this rule. She thought she owned *a* ~~us~~. She probably owed ~~this~~ somewhat disagreeable disposition to our son David, who loved to tease her. David would grab at the cat's tail, and the cat would turn on him and try to bite him. I think the cat really enjoyed David's teasing, but the cat's tail became a distinct bone of contention *between them.* ~~to the cat.~~ Most cats like you to pet them from the ears to the end of their tails, and they arch their backs and purr in response, but this cat had a distinct "hands off" attitude when it came to that tail. Any hand venturing into the area of said tail was asking for a sharp bite. Except for David, everyone left that tail alone.

My mother had died and my father was living alone in his home in Ogden. At that time he was fully alert mentally and getting along fine, but our children worried about him being lonely. They came up with the idea that a kitten would be a great source of comfort to him, and so, yielding to their pleading, I started to look for a kitten.

A neighbor, and long time friend, Donna Rae Woolf had a sister in Salt Lake City, whose cat had just produced a litter of kittens and she was looking for homes for them. As we were about to drive to Tacoma, Washington to attend the wedding reception of Tracy and Betsy Huntington Hall, whose parents were hosting the reception, we arranged to pick up the kitten on our way through Salt Lake and deliver it as a surprise to Dad Langford in Ogden. However, when we arrived at Donna Rae's sister's home, the children could not decide between a white one and a gray one, and so we ended up getting both. We stopped at Dad's on the way to deliver the kittens. We were all sure we had a wonderful idea. Only it didn't turn out quite that way.

On our return from Tacoma we stopped to see how Dad and the kittens were getting along. They weren't!

"Please take those kittens home--they are driving me wild!" Dad said. Apparently the kittens had had a great time! But Dad hadn't. ~~The~~ kittens had joyfully chased each other all over the house, across the backs of the couches and chairs, and around and around through the rooms. We took them home.

vetarian Then we were presented with the problem of what to do with the kittens. We were afraid that the white cat, who wasn't taking to them very well, either, would kill the kittens. Anne Madsen took the white one off our hands, but we were stuck with the gray kitten. The children pled with us to keep him and I reluctantly agreed, but stipulated that if he were going to live with us, he would have to take his chances with cat diseases, injuries, etc. without benefit of ~~vetinary~~ assistance. The white cat had been in and out of the vet's office more times than I could count, and I was sick of it. I was fed up with expensive medical attention for cats. He would have the necessary shots, neutering, etc., but after that he was

on his own. The children agreed. Fortunately for "Cat" which I will call him for the purpose of telling him apart from our white cat, he was a very healthy cat!

The white cat, was definitely annoyed at this feline intrusion into her territory, and would slap and hiss whenever the gray kitten got near ~~him~~^{her}. The kitten, however, just endured her insults and threats with patience and fortitude. The white cat soon learned that he was here to stay and a part of the family, and before long she reluctantly accepted him. She assumed the position of "boss" and bossed him around as if she were his mother. She took over his grooming ~~completely~~. She washed him with her tongue constantly. He was never as clean after she was killed, as when she was alive.

Cat had a very sweet disposition. He thought that any empty lap was fair game and when we had company I had to put him outside or he would jump into the laps of our visitors. He soon found out that there was one lap that was out of bounds--Tracy's. And he was smart enough not to try it. David soon found out it did no good to tease Cat. He would only purr. He was, therefore, no challenge. Nancy took him over. Mornings we would often find Nancy asleep on her stomach with Cat stretched out asleep on Nancy's back. Nancy could do anything to that cat, and he would just endure it. Nancy was nine or ten when Cat came to live with us, and when she grew up, married and had Carli Ann, Cat had to endure Carli. Carli could pick the cat up by the tail and he would just purr. Our family has had several cats, but none of them had as sweet a disposition as Cat. We had been told that Cat was a cross between a Siamese cat and the common alley cat. Fortunately for us, Cat didn't inherit the whinny voice of the Siamese nor the unpleasant disposition that some Siamese cats have. The only thing he inherited from his Siamese father was a nice form and some tan underlining in his gray stripes.

*a daughter
Carli Ann,*

One day the white cat disappeared. She had become too confident of her own power. She would sit in the middle of the drive way and refuse to move out of the way as we drove the car into the drive--almost defying us to run over her. Of course we never did. We would get out and remove her so we could drive into the carport. We never found her! I suppose she tried to dare some other automobile to run over her. A car driven by a driver not so tolerant of her insolence.

This left the field to Cat and he ruled the roost for the rest of his life. However, he had to be removed out of Nancy's room because she developed asthma. That is, he had the field to himself until one day, several years after the white cat disappeared, Cat disappeared, too. The children searched all over for him, to no avail. We thought he might have met the same fate as the white cat. Cat disappeared in Spring. About three months later, in Autumn, a cat appeared at the south sliding doors and meowed to come in.

"Mother," the children cried, "our cat has come back!"

"Oh, come on," I said, but I hurried down to the basement sliding doors. And there was a gray, striped, cat very much resembling Cat, but somewhat more mangy looking.

"Well, there's one way to find out for sure," I said. "Let him in!"

Cat had always got his drinks of water by leaping up onto the counter next to a washbasin in one of the bathrooms and meowing for someone to put some water into the basin so he could get a drink. Sure enough Cat headed for the bathroom and jumped up beside the basin. I pushed down the plug and turned on the water. Cat had returned!

It turned out that Tracy was having trouble with mice down at his Columbia Avenue shed where he had his machine shop, and decided that since Nancy was allergic to the cat anyway, he would take Cat down to the shed and let him live there. The only trouble was that he was very sneaky about it. He never told anyone why Cat had so suddenly disappeared. He knew, I suppose, that the children would demand Cat's return.

Tracy realized that Cat's radar was now in force, and it would do no good to return him to the shed, as he would promptly return home, so he took Cat almost to Springville and let him out near some farm houses. I suppose Tracy thought he would find a nice barn full of mice to live in. When he told me what he was going to do, I somewhat angrily told him that I was not going to hide his crimes. If the children wanted to know where Cat was, I would tell them to go and ask their father. I didn't need to worry! Cat was back by evening. That was the last of the joy rides. Cat had won the battle.

As Cat got old he became less fastidious about his toilet habits, and I would find his mistakes all over in various parts of the house. The house began to smell like cat's urine, and there is no worse smell in the world. So Cat had to be relegated to outdoors. Tracy cut a "cat hole" in the garage so that he could sleep out of the cold in the carport storage wall. We had a freezer in there, so the carport storage wall was reasonable warm. The children fitted him up with a box which had a small blanket folded up in it. But Cat would lie in wait until someone would open the door and then sneak in. *Then he would hide so that I would not know he was in the house. Not at least, until I smelled him.*

One spring after Cat was relegated to the outdoors, we had a rash of wild cats who lived in the next door neighbors' bushes. Cat was a gentleman. He never picked a fight, but he always stood his ground—even to the neighborhood dogs. But those cats made his life miserable. The kittens and the mother cat were wild and ran whenever humans approached, but they would eat Cat's food and sleep in his bed. We found we were not feeding just Cat but half the cats in the neighborhood.

I became a cat exterminator. I got traps from the animal shelter and all in all caught ten cats--the wild ones in the bushes. Two adults and two teenagers, and the rest quite small. I took them down to the animal shelter as I caught them. I was tempted to take Cat along with them, but my love for him always got the better of my reason. I just couldn't bring myself to it. Besides, the animal shelter smelled terrible. It was bad enough taking cats I cared nothing for, but to leave Cat in such an environment?

Once when we got back from a vacation, Cat was limping as if he had a broken leg. Well, I gave the children the old--"Let me know if he doesn't quit limping in a week." After a week, he was still limping, so I took him to see the vet. The vet took him from me and put him on the floor--Cat walked away with nary a limp! That cat had been putting me on. Cat was getting so mangy--he never was very good at cleaning himself. Every once in a while Nancy would give him a bath. The last week of his life he just moped around, not eating. I began to worry that I would come outside one day and he would be dead in the bushes or something.

our granddaughter, Carli Anne Mecham, a half two years of age
Carli Anne had been staying with us during the day for a week or so between baby sitters and how she did love that cat. She would pick up Cat and carry the poor old thing around until I couldn't stand it any more and would rescue him. But he never fought back--just endured. One morning someone had left him in the house overnight. When I got up--there he was. "Oh, oh!" I said, "Where did he do it this time?" Sure enough--he had urinated in the front closet. Phew!

italics

After I cleaned up the mess, I decided that it was time to put that poor cat out of his misery. I called the vet to see how much it would cost and how it was done. I wanted to make sure he wouldn't suffer. The vet said it would cost me ten dollars if he disposed of the body, and eight dollars if I disposed of the body. I decided to opt for the \$10. version. The vet assured me that he would not suffer. He would administer an overdose of anesthesia and Cat would sleep quietly away.

I thought I could do it without experiencing too much trauma, but when I picked him up to take him for his last ride, I began to cry. Cat never objected to going for a car ride. He didn't like it much, and hid under the car seat. But when we got to our destination, he came out from under the seat and I picked him up. I knew if he got away from me, he would just run home. Tears were still streaming down my face when I got into the Veterinarian's exam room and lay Cat on the table. The Veterinarian gave him a shot and he went to sleep immediately. I had to admit that it was a much better way to go than to leave him at the animal shelter. The Vet offered his shoulder for me to cry on, but I told him I would go home and use Tracy's.

lowe
my husband's shoulder - Bless his heart
We all loved "Cat."

I admit that I felt guilty. Was I cruel? Or was I compassionate? All I knew was that Cat had to go or I had to re-carpet the house or both. We all loved Cat. Even Tracy had a soft place in his heart for Cat. In spite of the trip to Springville. I'm getting older myself. Will I want my children to put me to sleep when I no longer have control over my bladder, and cannot think or communicate? That thought kept Cat around for longer than I probably should have kept him. Come to think of it--when I am in that shape, I may wish someone could quietly put me to sleep. Bless his mangy old heart!

Keep the same
also beloved "Cat" ended his life quietly, dying of